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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/081,700	02/22/2002	Joo Hwa Tay	690105.401	1272
500	7590	12/11/2003	EXAMINER	
SEED INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW GROUP PLLC			BARRY, CHESTER T	
701 FIFTH AVE			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
SUITE 6300				
SEATTLE, WA 98104-7092			1724	

DATE MAILED: 12/11/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/081,700	TAY ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Chester T. Barry	1724	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 4/29/02.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1,4-7 and 9-15 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 2,3 and 8 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 2/22/02 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
 a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____

Claims 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 – 13, 15 are rejected under Sec 103(a) as unpatentable over Ref AS and Ref AQ.

Ref. AS describes the benefit of a starvation period on cultivation of aerobic sludge granules useful in sludge blanket waste water treatment processes.

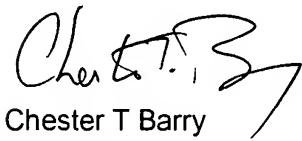
Ref. AQ describes the benefit of providing at least about 1.2 cm/s superficial velocity of air while cultivating aerobic sludge granules useful in sludge blanket waste water treatment processes. Among the benefits are improved settling ability and hydrophobicity.

It would have been obvious to have provided periodic starvation periods while cultivating according to the Ref AQ technique, as suggested by Ref. AQ, in order to make granules of improved form and properties, as suggested by Ref AS.

Alternatively, it would have been obvious to have fluidized the seed particles and granules of Ref. AS at a superficial velocity of 1.2 cm/s or more in order to improve granule form and properties, e.g., hydrophobicity or settling velocity, as suggested by Ref AQ.

Claim 14 is rejected under Sec 103(a) as unpatentable over Ref AS and Ref AQ as applied above, further in view of USP 5985150. Pat '150 describes a method of separating granules from the wastewater using a portion of a vessel that is not aerated (3). It would have been obvious to have employed such a device to harvest the granules of Ref AS as modified by AQ, or of Reg AQ as modified by Ref AS, in order to facilitate granules / water separation, as taught by the patent.

Claims 2 – 3, 8 are objected to, but would be allowed if presented in independent form.



Chester T Barry
Examiner
703-306-5921